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ABSTRACT

The way in which faculty reward is linked to faculty evaluation is examined. It is contended that faculty reputations continue to be important to instructional images and professional advancement of the individual and are dominant in many systems of faculty evaluation. The contradiction when faculty are evaluated on the basis of performance and then rewarded on the basis of reputation is noted. The determinants of faculty salaries appear to be a complex mixture of status or rank, preparation or background, research or scholarly achievement, and professional reputation. Additional trends and factors that must be considered in planning for effective reward systems include inflation, the changing missions of many institutions, and affirmative action and other efforts to reduce discriminatory practices in higher education. One weakness of current faculty development programs is their lack of firm linkage to institutional incentives and rewards. Among the possible approaches that might be effective for faculty development and the improvement of instruction would be the establishment of pay scales that are truly meritorious. (SW)

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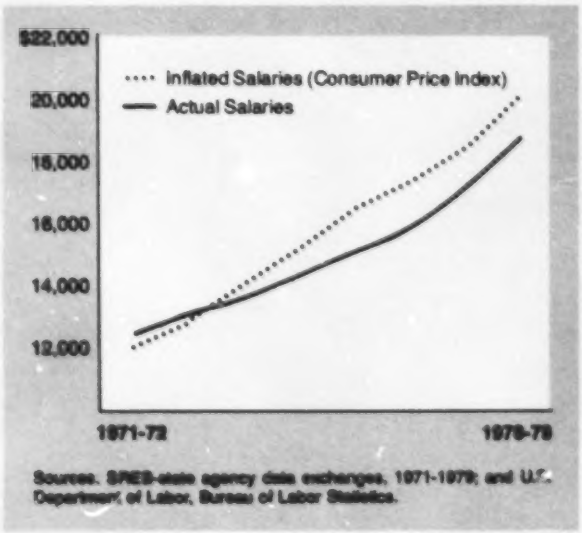
Linking Faculty Evaluation and Faculty Rewards in the University

In the 1950s there was widespread recognition that college and university faculty were underpaid. Comparisons of annual income with that of carpenters, electricians, and plumbers underscored the faculty member's lack of purchasing power and implied that the technical skills of faculty were not rewarded in comparable monetary terms. The nation's response was a sustained effort to raise faculty salaries, to make them competitive with other occupations and professions, and to demonstrate with increased financial benefits that the value of faculty services was appreciated (Figure 1).

Following a period of almost two decades of higher faculty salaries, other kinds of questions are now raised about faculty incentives and rewards. Critics — both friendly and skeptical — sometimes ask why faculty salaries are as high as they are. More sharply perhaps, they ask, What are faculty paid for? Is it research competence; is it service in the classroom; is it public service?

Figure 1

Actual Growth of Average Faculty Salary, 1972—1979, Compared to Rate Needed to Keep Pace with Inflation, SREB States



Sources: SREB-state agency data exchanges, 1971-1979; and U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Solutions to the problems of higher education, according to some critics, lie in sophisticated systems of faculty evaluation and accountability. Faculty evaluation programs are advocated on the basis that their application will be beneficial to all concerned: individual faculty will have a means of improving productivity and bettering chances for advancement; administrators will have a data-based procedure for decisions of recognition and reward; the public will gain assurance that institutions are not neglecting their instructional responsibilities; and students will have a means of influencing the events and processes that determine their future. This discussion is largely concerned with examining how closely faculty reward is linked to faculty evaluation in terms such as these.

Underlying the call for faculty evaluation and the interest in faculty salaries is a concern for the quality of instruction on college campuses. The belief is expressed in different ways but to the same point: if faculty evaluation and higher faculty salaries do not lead to better instruction, then they fail to do what they clearly should.

Are Faculty Evaluated on the Basis of Performance or of Scholarly Reputation?

In spite of all efforts at development of systematic evaluation, faculty effectiveness, especially in large universities, tends to be judged on something other than classroom performance. Course outlines and end-of-course examinations may be reviewed for insight into teaching effectiveness, but the opinions of both colleagues and administrative superiors, who are the actual decision makers, are more likely to be based on hearsay than observation. The disparities of student, collegial, and administrative views suggest strongly that acceptable systems of faculty evaluation must make clear distinctions between variables related to reputation and those linked to performance. Actually, both may be necessary for

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assessments and evaluations that would address the issue of instructional quality.

In the literature of higher education, there is abundant testimony to the interplay of reputation and performance. The importance of reputation in the recruitment and selection of faculty members is well-known. Likewise, publish-or-perish policies are still a fact of academic life on university campuses, and faculty members continue to believe they will be judged primarily by their reputations off-campus instead of on-campus. Papers that are read before colleagues at other locations will net more praise than papers presented to students at home, but neither will mean as much to faculty members as a paper printed in a prestigious journal, even though it might not be read at all. Faculty reputations continue to be important to instructional images, crucial to the professional advancement of the individual, and dominant in many systems of faculty evaluation.

The uses and applications of objectively administered faculty evaluation systems underline the need for better linkage with institutional rewards. Few faculty members can be so dedicated to teaching as to be unaware when factors related to reputation influence the way in which their professional careers are rewarded and advanced. Evaluation systems and procedures should be relevant to the faculty member's assigned duties and responsibilities, to observations or measures of performance in carrying out those duties, and to the effectiveness with which these responsibilities are met. There are definite and damaging contradictions when faculty are evaluated on the basis of performance and then rewarded on the basis of reputation.

What Determines How Much Faculty Are Paid?

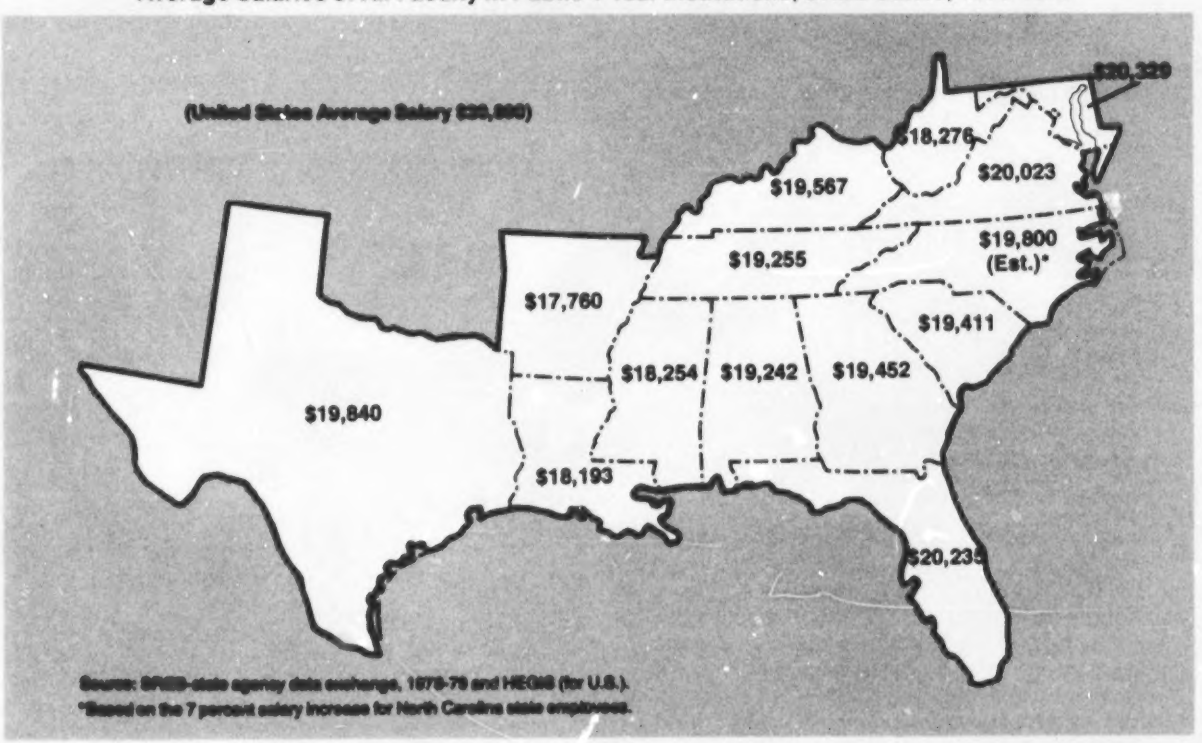
Faculty salaries are not the sole incentive in college instruction and, for many faculty members, they may not even be the most important reward. But salary is the incentive or reward most amenable to analysis, and it is the most obvious institutional reward available to faculty members.

Those analysts who define salary as a direct cash payment for employee services have paid particular attention to the division of faculty labor and have sought to explain faculty salaries by the time spent on instructional, research, service, and administrative activities. The distinction between economic and noneconomic benefits is widely recognized, with the result that noneconomic benefits, perquisites, and so-called fringe benefits are usually studied at the aggregate level for professional groups or institutions. But whether treated as salary, compensation, or economic reward, such remuneration is presumably paid for individual effort and services, and it is the study of individual salaries that reveals the most meaningful patterns.

Some investigators contend that the factors that determine faculty salaries are few in number. Findings of a 1976 study of university faculty by Tuckman and Tuckman imply that level of faculty salaries is closely associated with the number of journal articles published by the individual faculty member, and differences in salary between publishing and

Figure 2

Average Salaries of All Faculty in Public 4-Year Institutions, SREB States, 1978-1979



nonpublishing faculty members will increase as they advance through the ranks of assistant, associate, and full professor. Age and work experience are influential until the faculty member reaches age 50. The male faculty member makes more money at all levels than the female faculty member and, within ranks, black faculty members report a higher salary than their white colleagues. Possession of a Ph.D. has apparently paid off handsomely for full professors but has not yet brought great advantage to the assistant professor. More money definitely can be made in some academic disciplines, such as law or medicine. The individual's salary increases appreciably with the acquisition of administrative duties, but the ambitious would do well to choose their geographic region wisely. Salaries in virtually all ranks are highest in the North and lowest in the West and Southwest. (Average salaries for 1978-79 in the 14 Southern states are shown in Figure 2.) But perhaps the most revealing finding of the authors was the absence of evidence that good teaching has any effect upon the determination of salary levels.

The reward structure of academic departments varies widely when analyzed in terms of faculty activities and professional experience. There is ample reason to believe that multiple reward structures exist in many institutions and that separate departments have a differential bargaining power for institutional resources (Figure 3).

While there may be considerable diversity of incentives and rewards among the various types of institutions, certainly the larger universities appear to have a reward system that places greater emphasis on research and administration than on instruction. Statistical analyses of faculty salaries do not show teaching effectiveness as a determinant of direct cash payment for faculty services. Nor do they show any appreciable correspondence between classroom performance — as observed by students and visitors — and institutional efforts to recognize and reward. What they do suggest is that faculty salaries are determined primarily by reputation as evidenced by administrative and collegial assessments of professional competency.

Analyses of faculty salaries disclose an interesting interplay of incentives and rewards in the skills and talents a faculty member chooses to emphasize and the time he or she apparently spends on campus functions or activities. The determinants of faculty salaries would appear to be a complex mixture of status or rank, preparation or background, research or scholarly achievement, and professional reputation that has proven serviceable in the past. The pay-off in institutional and career rewards is sufficient for faculty members to continue playing the game according to the rules they have understood in the past. Strong incentives will be necessary to change the incentives themselves.

What Additional Trends and Factors Must Be Considered in Planning for Effective Reward Systems?

Inflation may be the most significant trend in the national economy affecting institutional incentives and rewards in higher education. However, the latest studies (Bowen) indicate that faculty salaries have kept a reasonable pace with inflation during the 1970s, although often falling short of comparable jobs in business, industry, and government (Table 1). Trade-offs may be present in many efforts to compensate for decelerating salaries by accelerating fringe benefits, but inflation may have taken a particularly harsh toll in benefits — such as travel to professional meetings, consulting opportunities, and retirement plans.

Efforts to augment faculty compensation often produce pressures for the curtailment of privileges and perquisites that faculty take for granted. As Bowen has pointed out, there are

Table 1

Detailed Salary Comparisons, Junior Faculty in Higher Education and Employees of Private Business, 1977

(In Thousands of Dollars)

Position	Typical degree	Typical years of experience	Average salary
Instructors, higher education:			
Salary at lower quartile, 9-10 months contract	Master's	5	$10.3
Mean salary, 9-10 months contract	Master's	5	11.9
Mean salary, 11-12 months contract	Master's	5	12.6
Comparable positions in private business:			
Civil engineer	B.S.	1-3	18.0
Mathematician	B.A.	1-3	16.3
Accountant	B.B.A.	2-4	14.7
Attorney	J.D.	0-1	18.7
Labor relations representative	B.A.	1-2	17.1
Economic analyst	B.A.	2-4	17.7
Positions in business paying comparable salaries:			
Junior draftsman	none	limited	10.3
EDP programmer	A.A.	0	10.5
Junior chemical technician	none	limited	10.4
Biologist	B.S.	0-1	12.1
Accountant	B.B.A.	0-1	12.6
Junior methods and procedure analyst	B.S.	0-1	12.7
Applications programmer trainee	B.S.	0-1	11.9

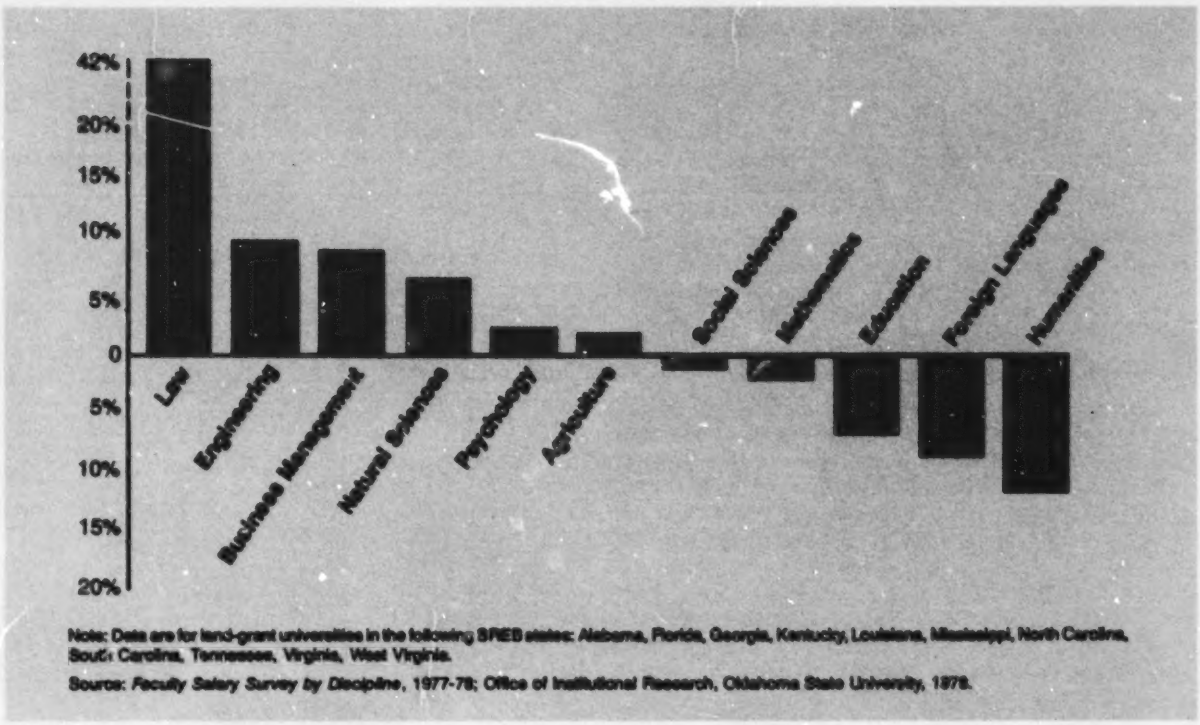
Source: Howard R. Bowen, *Academic Compensation: Are Faculty and Staff in American Higher Education Adequately Paid?* New York: Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association, 1978.

both losses and gains for higher education in faculty opportunities for outside income. Gains in professional proficiency and practical experience may be offset by neglect of academic duties and misuses of professorial status.

Another trend affecting faculty incentives and rewards may be seen in the changing missions of many institutions. Just as threats to national security and prestige in the 1950s thrust a new role upon universities in the form of research and development, so a declining college-age population is spurring many institutions to redefine their academic programs and educational services. Although public service has long been "a third mission" for state universities, and community service has been an approved function for many two-year colleges, other colleges are now hard-pressed to mobilize faculty and institutional resources for cost-effective service programs for which there is demand. Although faculty have frequently expressed an ambivalence toward service or extension programs in general, reduced demands for sponsored research and the likelihood of reduced student enrollments may focus greater interest on public or community service

Figure 3

Comparison of Discipline Salaries, as a Percent of Average Salary for all Disciplines, Selected SREB States



Note: Data are for land-grant universities in the following SREB states: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia.

Source: *Faculty Salary Survey by Discipline*, 1977-78; Office of Institutional Research, Oklahoma State University, 1978.

and its accommodation within a framework of institutional rewards.

Finally, affirmative action and other efforts to reduce discriminatory practices in higher education give an external or societal incentive to address issues of equity and parity in faculty salaries. Public policy suggests that inequities in salary no longer can be condoned if they are based on age, sex, race, ethnic, or religious characteristics. On the contrary, public policy would seem to specify that such characteristics must not be determinants of salary and other institutional rewards. External labor markets prove difficult to justify as reasons or causes of lower pay for female faculty members, and institutional policies that foster continuance of discriminatory patterns are particularly suspect (Figure 4).

How Much Can Faculty Development Accomplish?

A critical look at faculty evaluation procedures and institutional rewards leads to conclusions, tentative or otherwise, that current methods and practices do not serve well the development of faculty and the reward of instructional excellence. Appreciable lip service is given the importance of faculty development, and while institutions place a premium on the quality of instruction, close examination of evaluation practices and the results suggests strongly that these practices serve administrative personnel decisions more readily than they do systematic efforts to develop and improve professional competencies and institutional effectiveness.

The beneficial consequences of administrative decisions concerning appointments, promotions, tenure, and salary increases are acknowledged by many administrators to be indirect. It is expected that incompetent instructors will eventually be identified and eased out. In this way the quality of instruction will eventually improve and the institution's programs and services will become more effective. Efforts to identify particular strengths and weaknesses of faculty and to provide developmental resources for individual faculty members tend to be spasmodic or unconcerted. Extradepartmental campus centers for faculty or instructional development, learning resources, and other forms of direct assistance to teaching faculty tend to be budgeted with limitations both in amount and time. Too often, they are at the mercy of outside funding that is unlikely to continue, and internal administrative support fluctuates with any change in overseeing deans or vice presidents.

A more crucial weakness of current programs and practices, however, may be their lack of firm linkage to institutional incentives and rewards. Presidential praise and campus visibility may or may not be elements in the institution's system of values, but they are unlikely to sustain creative, innovative efforts in the absence of hard-and-fast rewards that communicate institutional priorities and commitments. Skeptics who prefer to analyze budgets and who eschew the college catalog may be right in their expectations that the budget will tell them more. If there are incentives for faculty

to develop professionally and to improve instruction, instructional budgets should not conceal them. If serious institutional commitments are made to quality of instruction, then faculty salaries, status, privileges, work assignments, teaching loads, and rated effectiveness should reflect that commitment.

Projected demands for educational services in the 1980s imply that different skills and talents may be needed by many faculty members. Conditions in the academic job market indicate that it will not be feasible to recruit and select new faculty members who possess those skills and talents but, rather, it will be necessary to develop them in faculty members now employed. Faculty development is unlikely to meet this need unless varying skills and talents can be recognized and rewarded effectively within a context of institutional incentives and rewards.

How Shall Excellence Be Rewarded?

John Bevan lists a number of new kinds of rewards including visiting lectureships for on-campus faculty members with special interests and talents, opportunities to conduct faculty seminars on topical issues, the status of master teacher with a reduction in teaching load that will be used for teaching improvement rather than research, the status of distinguished research professor, and other forms of recognition, such as mini-grants, sabbaticals, and credit for overloads that can be banked. (Also included in Bevan's suggestions are "little things" — like words of appreciation from deans, and other actions that reinforce attempts to improve faculty performance.)

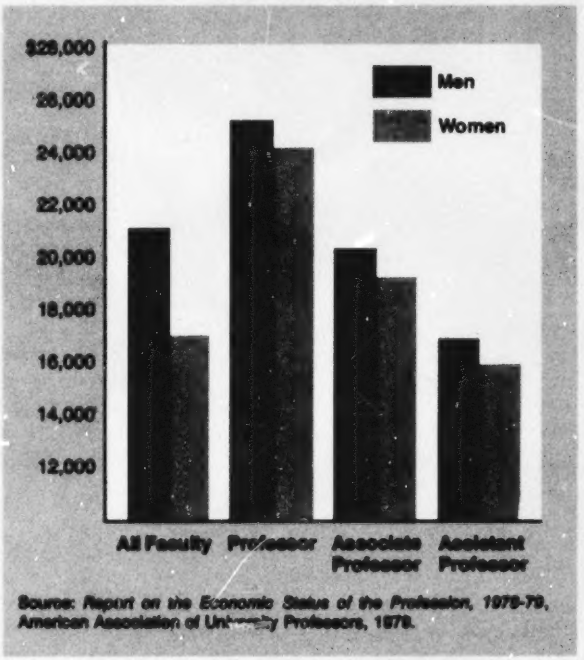
Several recommendations can be expanded with good promise of working instructional improvement and public service into an institution's incentive-and-reward system. Universities that appoint distinguished research professors should consider similar appointments in teaching and public service. The appointment of distinguished teaching professors, who would work closely with undergraduate students, and of distinguished service professors would be one way universities could communicate their commitment to teaching and public service. This kind of recognition for undergraduate teaching and public service would seem especially relevant for institutions in which appointment to a graduate faculty carries the divisive implication that all other faculty are undergraduate and/or junior faculty. To be effective, however, appointments as distinguished teaching professors and distinguished service professors should be made with all the amenities, perquisites, and symbols of achieved status that now accompany the research professorship.

The improvement of undergraduate instruction could be achieved by explicit policies concerning the planning and development of undergraduate courses. It would be advisable for some faculty members to spend a third or a fourth of the assigned workload on the planning and organization of courses to be taught the following term. Funds should be available for the development of course prospectuses, quizzes, and end-of-course examinations that fully communicate course objectives, content, and procedures to students and also administrators or colleagues who might be called upon to assess faculty productivity. Just as there are skeptics who would skip the rhetoric of catalogs and study the budget, there are those who believe they can ignore the instructor's recitation of course objectives and study his or her exams instead. The products of instruction may well provide a better basis for evaluating faculty productivity than most process variables. If released time for course planning development is an unrealistic matter for some colleges, there should be, at least, internal planning grants available for the same purpose.

Strenuous efforts should be made to encourage faculties to participate in the recognition and reward of their own. Many teaching awards are either initiated by a benevolent administration or eventually dominated by deans and department heads who redirect the original intentions of the award. Student groups that seek to recognize outstanding teaching too often suggest that they are unable to distinguish between excellent teaching and attentive administration. Does the paucity of teaching honors initiated by and implemented by faculty imply that faculty do not take such honors seriously or that they are uncertain about performances or personalities that should be honored?

Figure 4

Average Salary For Men and Women, All Faculty, By Rank, United States, 1978-1979



Source: *Report on the Economic Status of the Profession, 1978-79*, American Association of University Professors, 1978.

Perhaps the single drastic change that would be most effective for faculty development and the improvement of instruction would be the establishment of pay scales that are truly meritorious. The difficulties of defining merit are sufficiently discouraging, however, and the question has been raised as to whether colleges can afford such a thing. Chait points out that merit pay can serve as an incentive only when it is substantial. Unless meritorious performance makes an obvious difference in pay, it may be easier to defer to the conveniences of across-the-board raises, notions of seniority,

or considerations of faculty need. Most department heads may not have sufficient increments in an annual budget to differentiate meritorious or productive faculty members from those who "also served." Given so little to accomplish so much, they may decide to allocate salary increments proportionally on some principle that will minimize faculty complaints. In turn, knowing that policies for merit pay are loosely constructed, faculty members may perceive an annual increment as nothing more than an adjustment needed to maintain living standards.

A more noticeable weakness of merit pay as an incentive may be that, like an administrative supplement, it can seldom be taken back. The addition of a "bonus" or merit supplement from outside funding for a transitory period may soon be indistinguishable from the faculty member's base salary, and its eventual discontinuance is known to have negative psychological effects.

Vigorous experimentation with faculty incentives and rewards during the coming years will be in the best interest of higher education. Provisions for merit pay should be available for faculty who deserve consideration above or apart from their colleagues. More institutions should have a larger differential in salaries for senior and junior faculty members and a smaller differential between senior faculty and administrators. Neither administration nor research should be perceived as the sole high road to better earnings, and perhaps all institutions should develop more explicit policies and practices for recognizing and rewarding the full range of services asked of faculty members. While faculty members may have thrived on ambiguity in the past, they will not be able to in the future.

This edition of *Issues in Higher Education* was prepared by Cameron Fincher, director of the Institute of Higher Education at the University of Georgia.

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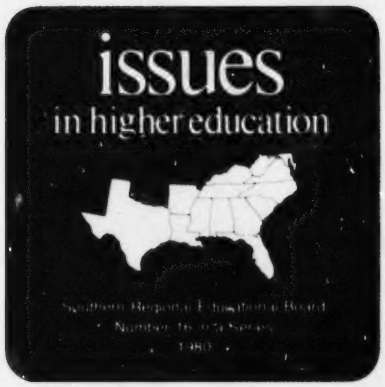

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